

### Introduction

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### Words from the Chair of SACRE

It has been my pleasure to Chair Reading SACRE in the year from September 2024 to August 2025. As ever I am deeply indebted to all members of the Committee for giving their time voluntarily to the work of this Committee. I would like to extend particular thanks to those members of the Local Authority who have offered wise counsel and support through some tricky meetings this year. We welcomed Katie Dickens as our new adviser and are delighted that we shall continue to be well served by the Diocese.

In October 2024 Reading Agreed Syllabus Conference resolved that the pan-Berkshire syllabus be adopted by Reading SACRE, and recommended to the Council for formal adoption.

However, in March 2025, Reading received a challenge to the Syllabus from a group of Judaism representatives. Accordingly, a decision was made by SACRE members to postpone the adoption while this challenge was investigated and any action that needed to be taken could be presented at the next meeting. At time of writing, the Syllabus is still under review.

Yours respectfully,

Rev Jo Williams

### Summary of SACRE meetings

- Reading SACRE met three times during the year 2024 -25, on 16<sup>h</sup> October 2024, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
- The Pan Berkshire syllabus was challenged by key members of a number of the Pan Berkshire SACREs, between ASC approval and council ratification. The LA chose to ask the ASC to reconvene in order to find a way forward. Therefore, the bulk of the work in the academic year 2024-25 has centred around how a new locally agreed syllabus specific to Reading would be managed and agreed for the next academic year.
- The new RE adviser, who is an employee of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, took up her role from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.
- All meetings of the SACRE and the ASC have been held online and broadcast on YouTube.

### RE (statutory responsibilities)

#### The locally agreed syllabus

- A concern was raised to the Local Authority in March 2025 about the legitimacy of the Agreed Syllabus process. This triggered the Agreed Syllabus Conference to be reconvened. As a result, the Cabinet Member decision was deferred.
- This matter is likely to continue into the academic year 2025-26.
- As a result of the challenge, the agreed launch of the Pan-Berkshire syllabus event, was reframed as a training event for schools across Berkshire. The event took place on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and was well-attended by schools. It has subsequently been challenging for schools to be in a holding pattern pending the outcome of SACRE deliberations, particularly as the old syllabus remains in use following the perceived launch event.

#### Standards and monitoring of RE

- With the added complexity around the review of the locally agreed syllabus, there has been minimal capacity for any specific monitoring of the syllabus, although the Voluntary Controlled schools, using the current Agreed Syllabus, have been shown to have strong outcomes in RE through SIAMS inspections.

## Reading SACRE Annual report 2024-25

- Current SACRE constitution was deemed to be out of date. Clerk, Chair, and legal team will draft a new version for approval in Autumn 2025.
- A draft Code of Conduct, based on NASACRE and Nolan principles, was presented. Members were generally supportive; each member was asked to confirm their representation with their nominating body.
- No LA schools have received a deep dive in RE from Ofsted, and no SIAMS inspections of VC schools took place, so standards have not been explored that way. No reports have been received from LA school Standards in Education Partners (STEPS) from Ofsted feedback sessions.
- No schools in Reading have applied for or achieved REQM awards.
- SACRE advertises local and national training to schools through the termly newsletter. This newsletter also contains information about resources that are available, and information about faith traditions. The initiative to include a report on the RE network meeting from the previous term, so that teachers unable to attend can see what has been discussed has continued to pay dividends, resulting in better attendance at meetings.
- SACRE has not received any complaints about RE in schools.
- The LA has been advised that SACRE should be informed of any Deep Dives that take place in RE, or where RE is mentioned in feedback, as part of the broad and balanced curriculum. SACRE has not been informed of any deep dives in RE and no feedback has been received from any of the school improvement team.
- GCSE Results:
  - Overall attainment: In GCSE Religious Studies full course, Reading LA's aggregated outcomes are below national at 9–5 and 9–4.

### Collective Worship (CW) (statutory responsibilities)

- The LA has been advised that they should report to SACRE on any schools visited where they observe good Collective Worship, or where they are aware that it is not being adequately provided. No reports or feedback have been received.

### Determinations

- No determinations currently exist in Bracknell Forest, and none have been applied for.
- No Teacher training on collective worship has been provided, but materials and advice for schools are communicated in the SACRE newsletter.
- No complaints have been received about collective worship. SACRE does not have the capacity to monitor collective worship formally; SACRE has not advised the LA on any matters connecting to worship, other than the requirement to feedback.

### Links with other bodies

- Reading SACRE continues to be a subscribed member of NASACRE and has also purchased the training package. Members have attended some of the training and the new members have been given the NASACRE handbook and encouraged to attend the 'So you've joined your local SACRE' webinar that runs at least twice a year. Members were also booked for the AGM, and the adviser is a member of the NASACRE executive committee. The NASACRE briefings are distributed to SACRE and many of the items are discussed in SACRE meetings and used to inform the agenda.
- The RE Adviser is a member of AREIAC, and information is shared where it is relevant.
- The RE networks are NATRE linked and NATRE resources are shared. The RE networks are also advertised on the new RE Hubs website. Faith communities have also been invited to participate in the hub training for speakers and places of worship.
- The RE adviser is also adviser to the Diocese, and two other Berkshire SACREs and so training opportunities are shared wherever feasible.

### Local SACRE involvement

- No Governor training has been provided.

### SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities)

#### LA support for SACRE

- SACRE pays for a professional adviser for five and a half days per financial year. This covers preparation for and attendance at meetings, preparing and running the three RE network meetings, writing and editing the termly SACRE newsletter and writing the annual report. This does not cover adviser time for visiting or supporting schools, other than as additional work, paid for by the schools.
- SACRE is ably supported by a knowledgeable clerk. The local authority officer attends meetings and RE networks, as well as providing the booking facilities and communication processes. Both LA officer and clerk are involved in the agenda planning meetings with the chair and adviser.

#### Membership

- There has been some movement in the membership of the SACRE this year. There has been more consistent representation from the local authority. In addition, there have been new members appointed to groups A, C & D. There is also a new RE Adviser for the committee from April 2025.
- Training for SACRE (and ASC) members has been offered through the delivery of the NASACRE presentation on ASCs. Members have also been encouraged to attend NASACRE webinars. Members were also made aware of the Culham St Gabriel's online training courses that would give them background on RE and Worldviews.
- Financial arrangements for SACRE (and where appropriate, ASC).

### Appendices

#### Appendix 1 Attendance 2024-25 SACRE

**P=Present; A=Apologies; N=Absent**

Member	Group	5 Nov 2024	27 Feb 2025	3 Jul 2025
Rev Jo Williams	B	P	P	A
Fiona Middlehurst	B	-	P	P
Fiona Monger	B	A	A	N
Mark Laynesmith	B	P	P	P
Elizabeth Munro	C	P	P	P
Emma Raven	A/C	P	P	N
David Rees	Advisor	P	P	-
Rabbi Zvi Solomons	A	P	P	P
Vikas Srivastava	A	A	A	P
Amir Saqlain	A	A	A	N
Linda Heneghan	A	A	A	N
Julia Feeney	A	A	A	N

## Reading SACRE Annual report 2024-25

Cllr Mohammed Ayub	D	P	P	P
Cllr Meri O'Connell	D/C	P	P	P
Cllr Ruth McEwan	D	A	A	N
Cllr Stephen Goss	D	A	A	N
Cllr Rachel Eden	D	-	-	A
Brian Grady Clerk	RBC RBC	In attendance Deborah Talbot	In attendance Deborah Talbot	- Heather Mendham
Mo Galway	RBC	A	A	-

## Appendix 2 SACRE Accounts 2024-25

SACRE Budget 2024-2025	6000
consultancy charge - Summer- April - July 2024	1275
SACRE clerk - June 2024	225
Online subscription	60
NASACRE Annual Subscription: Academic Year 2024 - 25	115
consultancy charge - Sept 2024-Dec 2024	1525
Sacre Clerk - Nov 2024	225
consultancy charge - Jan 2025-March 2025	1275

## Reading SACRE Annual report 2024-25

Sacre Clerk - March 2025	225
Balance	<u>1075</u>

### Appendix 3 Meeting agendas

Full agendas and Minutes for SACRE meetings can be [here](#). It has been noted that not all minutes are available on the website and this will be rectified in due course.

### Appendix 4 GCSE RS results

Measure	Reading LA	National	Difference (pp)
<b>9–5 (strong pass)</b>	<b>55.0%</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>-5.7</b>
<b>9–4 (standard pass)</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>-5.8</b>
<b>Average points</b>	<b>4.69</b>	<b>5.05</b>	<b>-0.36</b>

### Appendix 5 Details of CPD provided to schools.

All CPD is overseen by the LA and linked to the priorities of the education department. Bookings are made through the central booking system, as for all Reading school CPD. It is the only CPD provided free of charge to schools.

### Appendix 6 Distribution List

This Annual Report should be circulated to the following groups:

- SACRE members
- Council members
- Education Department and schools o Libraries
- NASACRE
- Department for Education